

4 March 1987

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# Political Analyst Discusses Ethics, CIA

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At a buffet dinner last month, metro area members of the Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge learned about the necessity and effectiveness of the Central Intelligence Agency from Ernest W. Lefever, president of the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C.

Lefever, whose topic was "The CIA and the American Ethic," is a former consultant to the secretary of state, has written, edited or co-authored more than 15 books on government policies and ethics, and currently writes for American journals and newspapers, including the Wall Street Journal, Washington Times and U.S.A. Today.

Speaking on the nature and need of a strong U.S. intelligence capability, Lefever said, "Foreign intelligence, like military power and diplomacy, is the instrument of national policy. All major intelligence services perform four functions: collection, analysis, counterintelligence and covert action."

The covert actions of intelligence operations are the most controversial, Lefever said. "Covert operations are designed to alter political, economic or military realities. They are controversial precisely

because they frequently involve deception, and they, like war itself, sometimes involve people forces."

Covert actions take many forms, Lefever said. "They can involve deception, from giving financial support to radio stations or publications or a party in a crucial election, all the way to providing military or paramilitary aid to certain factions in a country. That's what we are doing now; it's not clandestine though, to the Contras in Nicaragua."

"Covert operations are undertaken to prevent developments deemed inimical to the interest of our own country, and to create conditions in which these interests will be advanced," Lefever said.

Lefever said there has been a marked decline in the United States' capability in intelligence, which "partly resulted from post-Vietnam retreat from reality and responsibility."

Congressional capabilities have declined as well, he said, while the chief adversaries have grown. "They have reversed us in Afghanistan, Angola, Ethiopia, Nicaragua and Iran, just to name a few."

To advance this thought, Lefever quoted a statement made in 1979 by former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger: "The emasculation of the CIA has con-

tributed to the failure of United States policy in Iran in three ways: by making intelligence analysts overly cautious; by practically depriving us of covert intelligence; and by altering the balance of expectations in Iran."

The heart of the intelligence operations issue, Lefever said, is the question, "Are foreign intelligence operations, particularly covert action that involves secrecy, deception and sometimes equal force, compatible with the Judeo-Christian ethic?"

"The answer is both simple and complex. American presidents have never hesitated to resort to espionage in times of great peril. In 1776, Washington told his general to leave no stone unturned in gathering intelligence against the British. All other wartime presidents have taken the same view," Lefever said.

"What about in this twilight period, between peace and war, in which we are now living? In fact, foreign intelligence can be thought of as a kind of warfare. Like war, intelligence is an extension of diplomacy by other means. Hence, all activities of our government during peace and war can and should be judged by the same fundamental political and moral standards."

Lefever said military force and political responsibility, or the "just war theory," does not say what theories for governments to take, but asks three crucial questions: Is the

objective of the contemplated action just? What are the means for accomplishing that objective justly and proportionately? Will the consequences of that act advance the cause of justice?

He said there are some guidelines in determining the answer to these questions. "A covert action or war may never be undertaken for trivial motives, such as a desire to bolster the ego of a ruling group, or for inappropriate purposes, such as an effort to reform the domestic institution of other societies."

"Just ends can be betrayed by unjust and inappropriate means. The force used must be proportionate with the objective. Excessive force is always wrong. In a just cause, such as repelling an invader, too little force is also wrong. It can prolong the struggle, cause a greater loss of life or a setback of the goal," Lefever said.

Lefever said the ultimate practical test for behavior is not the end sought or the means used, but the consequences of the actions. "Military or political action cannot be justified if it has little or no prospect of achieving the objective. A requirement for just consequences can be expressed by this question: If the military action or the covert CIA action succeeds, will the post-belligerency situation be likely to provide a better chance for peace, security, justice and freedom than the antecedent situation?"

The "just war theory" is especially pertinent to wartime or other conflict situations in which coercion is an accepted means for one or more parties, Lefever said. "Since 1945, we've been living in a condition of cold war in which Moscow and its clients employed both peacetime and wartime means to achieve their expansion and messianic objective."

Confronted with these dangers, the United States and allies and other threatened governments are "justified in employing unusual and even coercive means as long as they meet the three 'just war' criteria," Lefever said.

Lefever closed his talk on a positive note. "I still believe that the American people, especially the people represented in this group, middle America, God-fearing America, the American people, have material and spiritual resources to rebound from this setback (the Iran-Contra affair) and once again pursue a foreign policy worthy of our role as a leader of the free world."